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2. *Route from Pekin to St. Petersburg, viâ Mongolia.* By CHARLES MITCHELL GRANT, Esq.

AFTER some years' wandering, Mr. Grant found himself at Pekin, whence he determined to attempt the overland route to Russia. He obtained Chinese credentials and a Russian *visé*, and started in a mule-litter, accompanied by two baggage-carts. He had few difficulties and little adventure before reaching the Great Wall. He passed caravans carrying tea to Russia, and met cases of rifles in large numbers coming from Russia, as part payment for the cession of the Amûr ; and droves of ponies from Mongolia. Coal-pits were at work in the neighbourhood of Suen-hoa-foo, the head-quarters of the French Lazarist Mission in the north of China. His preparations for crossing the Desert of Gobi were made at Chang-kia-kow (called Kalgan by the Russians), which is an exceedingly important town, as all the Russian traffic passes through its gates. He says there is full employment for a sportsman in its neighbourhood in the pursuit of an abundance of wild ducks, antelopes and leopards. Here Mr. Grant dismissed his Chinese servants, who feared the cold of the Gobi Desert, and engaged two Mongols, with five camels and a cart, to take him to Kiakhta for 33*l.* He had also to procure a store of provisions for his own use, during the six weeks' journey before him. His party combined with four others, forming on the whole a caravan of 100 camels, under the leadership of a man whom they selected as their chief. The routine of travelling was as follows :—In the morning, two men on fast camels collected the herd, which were arranged in five files, for the purpose of being packed, a process that was completed in half an hour. They then started in one long row, each animal being tied by a cord six feet long, that led from its nose-ring to the gear on the back of the one that preceded it. Mr. Grant's cart was drawn by a single camel, and was of the rudest workmanship, without a particle of iron in its composition : its place was in the middle of the caravan, where he was attended by his two Mongols. In the afternoon some encamping station was reached ; that is to say, a well of water without any neighbouring village. The camels were then again arranged in files, quickly unladen, and turned loose to graze, with their nose-cords fastened round their necks. A two-poled tent of 18 ft. by 12 ft. was next pitched ; a bright hot fire of dry camel's dung was made in a grate in its centre, and a cauldron of water or snow boiled with pounded brick-tea. Each man carried a wooden bowl in his breast, which he used as a tea-cup. Then followed boiled meat and millet, also eaten from the bowls. The

chief of the caravan was the only Mongol who drank spirits, the others had simply water. Later in the evening the camels were collected and secured for the night; more tea was made, and pipes were smoked. The Llamas of the party chanted prayers every night, passing the prayer-book from hand to hand, that each might use it in his turn. Lastly the whole party huddled close to the fire and slept undressed, with their sheepskin-coats for a covering and their boots for a pillow. The cold at night was intense and variable: on April 6th, Mr. Grant registered 10° Fahr. below zero at 6 A.M., and usually on other days between +10° and +18° Fahr. The violence of the wind was remarkable in the desert of Gobi and in the north of China. The sailors' superstitious belief that whistling brings on a gale, is shared by the Mongols. Ourga, the capital of Mongolia, is the first town on the further side of the desert. The communication onwards to Kiakhta, occupies 4 days. Mr. Grant was, in all, 45 days from Chung-kia-kow to Kiakhta, during the whole of which time he tasted little else besides the provisions he carried. He considers no danger need be apprehended along the route he followed; but he would never recommend his countrymen to attempt it, as he did, alone. Mr. Grant's further journey to the Ural Mountains homewards is described in his Paper. He states that in his many travels he had never met with so much genuine hospitality and kindness as among the Russians. He discusses the proposed telegraph through Siberia, and looks forward to the time, at no distant date, when Pekin shall be connected telegraphically with London.

After the reading of the Papers on China, the PRESIDENT said he could not pretend to follow Mr. Grant in his varied excursion over so large a portion of the globe; but when he came towards the conclusion of it he felt himself somewhat at home, for he had also traversed the Ural mountains and descended the Tchussovaya River. He had also himself borne testimony, long before the Crimean war, to the hearty hospitality and kindness with which Englishmen are ever received by the Russians throughout those regions; and he was delighted to find that, after the close of a war which everybody now regretted, the same spirit of hospitality had been exercised towards Mr. Grant. To turn to the subject more immediately under consideration, we now learned from Mr. Grant that this so-called desert of Gobi is, in fact, a pastoral country. It is, to a great extent, clothed with grass; supporting numerous flocks and herds. It is not the ordinary route taken by the Russian caravans to and from China, of which they had just heard. It is a new route, which this adventurous traveller, depending entirely upon his own energy and his own means, has successfully traversed for the first time. He was glad to see present so many gentlemen connected with China, and he hoped they would favour the meeting with some information on the subject.

SIR HARRY PARKES said he thought the papers were exceedingly satisfactory in one respect, for they certainly established the efficiency and advantages resulting from the new treaty successfully concluded by Lord Elgin, one clause

of which gave to Englishmen and foreigners the right to travel through the length and breadth of that vast empire. It was also satisfactory to find that the passport which Mr. Grant obtained under the provisions of the recent treaty was sufficient to procure protection to that gentleman, that wherever he went the people received him kindly, and, on the whole, assisted him on his journey; and that in the outer dependencies of China, no less than in China itself, the people are not antagonistic to us as a race, and place no serious obstacles in the way of foreigners travelling through their territory. The countries described in the two papers which had been read are very interesting. In the first place, Manchuria is the cradle of Manchus (commonly known to us under the misnomer of Tartars) who conquered China upwards of two centuries ago, and continue to be the dominant race in that country. It is curious that that very country of Manchuria should have since become, in fact, almost a Chinese province; for the Chinese who now form the greater part of the population appear to have engrossed the province, and by peaceable means have almost reconquered the Tartars, who had previously conquered them. It was natural that in agriculture and commerce the Manchus would have to give way before the more industrious Chinese, whose profession is that of arms. He was afraid, however, that even in their own country, the cradle of the race, they exhibited the same martial degeneracy that is to be observed in the Manchu garrisons stationed in the different provinces of the empire. Mr. Michie said he saw nothing whatever of that strong military government, which we had been accustomed to read of, in the province of Shing-king, and that between Tientsin and Mukden he saw scarcely a hundred soldiers. Other travellers during the present year had crossed the same country, and they confirmed Mr. Michie's statement on that point. They spoke of the productive character of the country, and they also spoke of the numerous bands of robbers, who were mounted, and who seemed to career across the province, doing pretty much as they liked. He believed for a long period of time the Manchus tried to check as much as possible the immigration of Chinese into Manchuria; but lately, since the accession of the Emperor Taoukwang, the restrictions formerly imposed had been removed, and the Chinese have now penetrated very nearly up to the Amûr river, which we know is the present boundary of Manchuria. Not along ago, Manchuria was nearly twice the size it is now; but by the treaties of 1858 and 1860 between the Chinese and Russians, the greater part of the two provinces Kirin and Tszi-tsi-har have been ceded to Russia. In fact, they have, apparently without knowing what they did or the extent of the concession, given the whole of the sea-coast which they at one time possessed to Russia, and have excluded themselves entirely from the ocean. He dared say many would not regret the change, considering how little the Manchus have done to develop that vast tract, and how much in the cause of civilization and progress the Russians were likely to accomplish. Mukden has been built on the plan of Pekin. In fact, it is Pekin *in petto*. It looked very much as if they wanted Pekin No. 2 to be at hand, in case of their losing Pekin No. 1. Lately, however, Mukden has not been so well garrisoned and kept up as formerly; and we know that when we approached Pekin ourselves, in 1860, many of the Chinese Ministers protested against the Emperor going into Tartary, on this ground among others—that he would find all the population of the country beyond the Wall in a most disturbed and unruly state.

Looking at the two accounts given by Mr. Grant and Mr. Michie, he thought that the Manchus would compare favourably with the rival race, the Mongols. If we went back into the realms of history, we should find that they have fought against each other repeatedly. The Chinese have called in first the one, and then the other, and have pitted them one against each other on various occasions. The Mongols, however, with all their communication

with China, remain essentially a nomadic people, while the Manchus have acquired agricultural tastes and habits, are much more stationary than the Mongols, and have certainly done far more in the cause of literature and refinement. In their attempt to conquer China, the Mongols had to withdraw to their deserts after a period of eighty years; whereas the Manchus have kept possession for three times that period. But in Mongolia we observe the same great fact of the irrepressible Chinese settling down in this region which we were accustomed to look upon as a desert, and winning it from its nomade owners just as we see they have done on the other side in Manchuria. It appeared from Mr. Grant that Mongolia is not a waste tract, as has frequently been supposed. The first region entered beyond the Great Wall—inner Mongolia—is a very productive tract. Then we come to a plateau generally called Gobi, or desert, though the word Gobi appears to be applied to any tract that is not cultivated; at least, we do not find vast tracts of sand, and where there is no cultivation, it appeared to be hard pebbly plain. The plateau appears to be crossed, and a descent already commenced towards the Russian frontier, when we reach Ourga, the capital of Mongolia. Beyond that point we re-enter a better country, which is under cultivation, and yields cereals and grain; so that in crossing Mongolia we may divide the journey into three stages: the feeding-lands of inner Mongolia; then the central part, which we may continue to call by the name of Gobi, or desert; and then the third stage from Ourga to Kiakhta on the Russian frontier.

Mr. Grant had not only given us valuable information on the subject of that country, but he had also started a very practical question in which all England and, in fact, all Europe, had a very vital interest. It is the question of the speediest mode of communication with China, which he certainly thought, with Mr. Grant, might be conducted with much greater rapidity by the way of Russia than by our present route. The time occupied in communicating with Pekin by the usual overland route is at present not less than 55 days, and Mr. Grant says that, by means of couriers and telegraphs, this time might be very much reduced. We know practically that the Siberian route is already the quickest mode of communication, for the news of the Treaty of Pekin reached London *via* Russia a week before it came by the ordinary route, and we thus got the news in some 37 days. If it be the case that, with the existing rude means of travelling across Mongolia, information could reach us earlier by that than by the present steam-route, although the latter is aided by the telegraph from Alexandria, of course it stands to reason that, with improved appliances, the superiority of the Russian route might become much more marked, and communication might be greatly accelerated. We know that the Russians, as fast as they can accomplish it, are carrying a line of telegraph across their own dominions, with the view of reaching the Pacific, so as to communicate with their possessions in America, and that a part of their project, which they intend to effect within the next twelve or eighteen months, is to carry a branch line from Irkutsk to Kiakhta. A line of telegraph from Kiakhta to Pekin, or to the Taku ports, would then suffice to complete telegraphic communication between Europe and China. The difficulty lies between Kiakhta and Pekin. On his arrival in this country he heard that this enterprise had been thought of and discussed, and that some progress had been made in carrying it out by Mr. Reuter. That gentleman had put some questions to him as to the district between Kiakhta and Pekin; and he only regretted that he had not possessed Mr. Grant's information, that he might have enlightened Mr. Reuter more than he was able to do. That gentleman had now an agent at Pekin; and if the Chinese Government could be induced to second the plan, we might hope that this means of communication might be carried out. But until the question is fairly put to the Chinese Government, it is impossible to say whether they will be able to give the desired effect to the proposition.

Our present information is imperfect both as to the extent of their authority over the tribes inhabiting outer Mongolia, and over those of inner Mongolia. Between Manchus and Mongols a natural feeling of jealousy exists; and this, combined perhaps with past experience of their own, may have influenced the Chinese Government in declining the assistance of a Mongol force which the Mongol Prince Sangkolinsin lately volunteered to march into China, first against the rebels, and subsequently against the Allies. Still he believed the Chinese rule over the Mongols had always been a lenient one, and that, on the whole, the Mongols feel attached to the present Chinese Government. Their plan is to have all the chiefs of the different Mongol tribes in their pay; they give them large sums of money, rank, and various other privileges, in return for a very nominal tribute. The people had the character of being exceedingly obedient to their chiefs, and of readily submitting to whatever their chiefs required of them. Therefore, it is possible that there might be a sufficient rule in that vast tract of country to secure the protection of a line of telegraph from injury.

Mr. LAY said that there is certainly no country more entitled to the interest of the British public than China at the present moment. We have a very large trade with that country, out of which we make large profits. The trade at the port of Shanghai alone amounted to 29,000,000*l.* sterling in the year 1861; and the trade on the River Yang-tse-kiang in the first year after it was opened amounted to 4,000,000*l.* sterling. At the present moment, especially, the British people should show an interest in China, inasmuch as it is her hour of difficulty. By reason of her weakness and owing to the rebellion which exists in the country, China has shown a disposition to give access to foreigners; and it is our duty now to avail ourselves of that opportunity to introduce such reforms and improvements as will be beneficial alike to them and to ourselves. They had heard probably of the expedition which is being organised in this country to lend assistance to the Chinese Government. The object of that expedition is not only to strengthen the Government, but to be instrumental in introducing those reforms which will be our only security for peaceful relations with China. Prince Kung has shown a disposition, although struggling with great difficulties and with a strong party opposed to him, to avail himself of the services of Englishmen; and has given a promise that he will, in return for the advantages which he expects to gain from our assistance, adopt those reforms in his administration and introduce those improvements which will be our best guarantee, and gain us that access into China which has been hitherto denied to us. The country has suffered during the last few years partly from misgovernment at Pekin, and partly from the vastly increasing population, which the productive power of the soil is insufficient to maintain. There has been no outlet for that population. They have gone on increasing, and they must be fed; and, inasmuch as there is no rice to feed them, they rebel. He therefore thought that one measure to which attention ought to be drawn is, the organization of some scheme of emigration from China, so as to relieve the country of its surplus population, and colonise Borneo and other islands in the Indian Archipelago, where there are thousands of acres lying waste for want of cultivation.

A few words with respect to the Tae-pings. They are one of the parties giving the Government trouble at this time. He happened to be well acquainted with the men who formed the nucleus of the movement. Some of them some years ago were members of a Christian Union in Hong-Kong, and circumstances brought him into connexion with them, and led him to form a very unfavourable opinion of them. As members of the Union they were maintained by the money subscribed in this country. They represented themselves as coming from different provinces; and, according to the distance at which those provinces were situated from Hong-Kong, a sum of money was allowed to each

man, to carry him into his district and enable him to preach the Gospel and distribute tracts, each man receiving in addition a supply of Old and New Testaments. It came to his knowledge that these men never left Hong-Kong, and that they sold the Testaments to the Chinese printer, who in his turn resold them to the Christian Union, the Chinese printer receiving from 500 to 1000 per cent. upon each Bible. This is a fact which, he thought, should be known to the British public, and which certainly produced an unfavourable impression upon his own mind. He asked one of them, on one occasion, how it came to pass that they could reconcile themselves to this species of imposture ; and asked him more especially as to the advantage of their change of name, as he found they were all under false names. He was told : “ Well, possibly you have a Supreme Being, but we do not know ; we worship him now here, and we gain a living by it. If it should happen by-and-by that he really does exist, and he calls us to account for any shortcomings of ours in respect to our profession or otherwise, our answer will be : ‘ You are quite mistaken ; our name is not so-and-so, and so you will find if you will refer to the records of the village in which we were born.’ ” He thought with reference to the opinions we might entertain of the Tae-pings, that there was but one safe guide. If a disturbance occurred in Ireland, for instance, we should not expect the judgment of America, or Germany, or France, but we should ask ourselves what we thought of the rising. With regard to the Tae-ping rebellion, the question should be, What do the Chinese people themselves think of it ? They surely ought to know whether these Tae-pings are worthy of confidence or not. Now, everywhere they have pronounced against the rebels. In no one case, so far as he knew, had they received any support or assistance from the people ; and this he thought an unanswerable argument against them. As he said before, we went to China hoping not only to strengthen the Chinese Government, so as to enable it to give the protection that we require for our trade, but also to be instrumental in introducing the telegraph, which he thought a great lever by which to open the country to commerce. The first thing that should be done was, if possible, to introduce the telegraph-wire, and to connect Pekin with the provinces, so as to keep the Court informed of what transpires in the provinces. He hoped that, before twelve months should have passed, that—not the least result of the expedition with which he himself was connected—would be the first instalment of information that would be valuable to the Geographical Society.

MR. CRAUFURD asked Mr. Lay to describe the nature of the system under which the revenue is collected for the European trade, and the amount of the revenue.

MR. LAY said the system under which the revenue is collected at the twelve ports is this : the Chinese Government have appointed him, as Commissioner of Customs, to select for them officers who are placed at the ports. The revenue at Shanghai is at the rate of 1,000,000*l.* sterling by the last accounts. They had not the statistics for the other ports for the last year. The system has been in operation at Shanghai for seven years, and it has only been recently extended to the other ports ; but he expected to collect some 2,000,000*l.* sterling, or probably more, from all the ports taken together. The great thing to bear in mind in our relations with China is, to show that we wish them to make a profit as well as ourselves ; for it is only in that way that we shall make them willing to introduce those improvements which are so desirable.

MR. CRAUFURD asked what might have been the revenue before.

MR. LAY said that Shanghai last year collected a revenue of 800,000 taels ; and, when he took the customs seven years ago, it was only one-third of that amount. He believed the revenue at the other ports would be in proportion.

CAPTAIN SHERARD OSBORN, R.N., said the Papers applied to a part of the world and to an element that he was personally little acquainted with. As a sailor he

ought to know more about the waters and rivers of China than of the land. What he had read of Chin-king and Manchuria confirmed fully the observations they had heard from Mr. Michie. He looked upon that portion of Manchuria to which attention had been directed and of which they could best form an idea, by taking the area of Germany, with a population equal to that of London spread loosely over it, as destined to become a country of great importance in Eastern Asia. It is a great pulse and seed bearing district, and even when he was there at the first opening up of the Lake Petchili, he found the junks carrying down immense quantities of oil-cake to Shanghai and Swatow, so that by the aid of the oil-cake of that northern province was grown the sugar of the Southern States, and that fact was a remarkable proof of the circulation of trade going on in China. He did not think Newchang had answered the opinion we had formed of it, but he believed it would do so by and by. He believed that Manchuria was the Scinde of Eastern Asia, and that Newchang, like Kurra-nee, might take time but would eventually become a most important place of trade. With respect to the forthcoming expedition, with the command of which he had been entrusted, he could assure the Society that he should ever bear in mind that he was a member of this Society, and he was sure that all who accompanied him would do all they could to contribute to the geographical knowledge of this vast empire. In the next place he could assure them that they would not forget that they were both Christians and English officers. Those who fancied they were going out simply to slaughter the wretched Tae-pings were grossly mistaken. He was actuated by nobler motives, and he hoped to see carried out, as had been suggested by Mr. Lay, the development of an organised system of emigration from China, as a safety-valve for its present troubles and miseries. It would be, he should consider it, the greatest feat of his life if, upon taking any one Tae-ping town, he should be able to say that not a single soul had been unnecessarily slaughtered. He felt convinced that if this country would give its aid in providing an outlet for the vagabondage, banditti, and bad characters of China, to another sphere of action, these vagabonds would become good Chinamen and useful subjects in some parts of the Eastern Archipelago, and that it would be found one of the most effective means of suppressing the state of rebellion now existing in that country.

The PRESIDENT said there were yet many gentlemen present capable of offering observations upon the subject, but as the evening was too far advanced to call upon more than one speaker, he would therefore ask his honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to state the impression which had been produced upon his mind by what had passed on the subject.

The RIGHT HON. WILLIAM GLADSTONE, M.P., said he had been, he was afraid, one of the most ignorant, but certainly not one of the least attentive or the least interested of the listeners. In the official situation which he at present had the honour to hold, he had very good reasons—some of them not of the most agreeable description, others more agreeable—to have the name of China deeply engraven upon his mind. In the course of the last two-and-twenty years the history of our relations with that country had been a very chequered history, and even those who took the most favourable view of the circumstances of that period must feel, he thought, that it presented much which we were compelled to regret—at any rate to regret some even of the measures into which we may think that we have been driven; but he trusted we had reached the dawn of a happier day. In some points, and in one in particular which he could not help relating, it had been his lot long ago to learn a lesson of wisdom from the Chinese. It was during the period of controversy on the Corn Laws. At that time, in the course of a regular official correspondence, there happened to come before him a document relating to the dues payable on the tonnage of vessels entering one of the Chinese ports. The vessel in question was laden with rice,

and the language of the letter was singular. It was couched in the tumid style which was usual, so far as we could judge through translations, and especially at that period, with official persons in China. It spoke with the utmost contempt of external commerce in general, saying it was a matter of perfect indifference to the people of the Celestial or flowery land—if that be the true rendering of the Chinese phrase—whether the outer barbarians chose to come there with their cargoes or not. That was the general rule which the Chinese functionary, whoever he may have been, laid down; but he said, “There is one marked exception to be made to the insignificance of foreign commerce in general, that is, in the case where a foreign ship enters our ports laden with food for the people.” He therefore proceeded to lay down that that ship was to be admitted without the payment of any dues or charges whatever. He remembered the writer then wound up his letter with the words, “Your stupid younger brother sends his compliments.” But it was really a matter worthy of remark that at the very moment when we were ourselves so blind to economical truths and to the practical advantage of the country as to think our wisest policy was to use restrictive measures especially against the admission of food from abroad—we, the first of the commercial nations of the world—at that very moment the poor Chinese were teaching us a lesson which at a later period we had learnt and had applied with advantage to the country, how happily all men knew. The President had asked him to testify to any impression made upon his mind by the discussion that had taken place. He confessed he had always had a very deep impression with respect to what one might call the ideal character of the traveller. It appeared to him that no ordinary qualities are required to make a man a good traveller. To travel with profit, even in neighbouring countries, is no easy matter; but when we come to circumstances such as those of Mr. Grant in a remote country, with physical difficulties and social difficulties to contend with, there is required a combination of qualities, a readiness of self-command, a patience, a resolution, an ingenuity, a sagacity—all forming an aggregate of demand upon the mind and body, upon the human faculties in general, which it is by no means easy to meet. He frankly owned he considered it one of the chief prerogatives of the inhabitants of this island that it has furnished to the world so large a proportion of energetic and enterprising travellers. What he had heard to-night, especially in the case of Mr. Grant, convinced him that the breed is not extinct, and that, aided greatly by the beneficial agency of this Society, we are still likely to furnish a large supply of persons both qualified and willing to undertake the exploration of what yet remains unexplored of the surface of the globe. But there was one consideration higher still, for in vain would all that energy, and all that sagacity, and all that self-command be shown in opening up places still unknown to us, if, when we arrived there, we were to carry with us the curses and not the blessings of civilization. He was confident, and he entertained a sanguine hope from what he saw and heard upon every side, that a much higher standard of moral and social duty—of duty incumbent upon us both as Christians and as men—was now beginning to establish itself in the public mind, than what had at certain periods been observed and maintained. He trusted that the power and vigour that were being devoted to the work of travelling will only be the pioneers of a process which will be the means of conveying to foreign countries, so far as it was in our power, the very best of the blessings we ourselves enjoy; and he would say in conclusion, if that general persuasion of his had wanted any special confirmation, he should have derived that confirmation in the fullest manner from the few simple, manly, energetic, and expressive terms in which his gallant friend (if so he might be permitted to term him), Captain Sherard Osborn, had been pleased to announce to the meeting the spirit in which he was about to undertake that mission on which he was shortly to set forth. He was sure he expressed the universal sentiment even while he was speaking in his character of an indi-

vidual, but not, he believed, speaking sentiments alien to those of the statesmen with whom he had the honour to be associated, if he said to Captain Osborn that with all their hearts they bid him "God speed." They were sure the name and fame of our country were safe in his hands, and they trusted and believed that when it pleased God he should come back amongst us, he would come back with a great accession to his personal fame and celebrity, and also with the credit and honour of having added to the character of England in that distant quarter of the globe.

The President then adjourned the meeting to the 12th of January, 1863.

ADDITIONAL NOTICES.

(Printed by order of Council.)

1. *Progress Report of the Exploration Committee of the Royal Society of Victoria for 1861.*

THE Exploration Committee, in submitting their Annual Report, deem it sufficient to sketch merely in brief outline the main incidents which characterised the Victorian Expedition during the year. The glorious achievements, the severe sufferings, and the mournful losses, of the explorers caused universal admiration, anxiety, and grief, and have been recorded already so fully, and discussed so frequently in all their bearings, as to render their repetition now unnecessary.

It was stated in the report of the Committee for 1860 that the expedition had reached Menindie amply provided, and without any unusual difficulty.

The final departure of Mr. Robert O'Hara Burke (the leader), with the advance party from the Darling, took place on the 19th October, 1860. At Torowotto, on the 29th October, Mr. Wright, who accompanied him so far, left and returned to the Darling with the view of conducting the remainder of the expedition to Cooper Creek.

Mr. Wright reached Menindie on the 5th November, and on the 3rd December intelligence of his appointment as third officer and return to Menindie was received in Melbourne. The Committee considering the instructions originally given, ample to provide for any additional requirements which in distant parts of the country might be found needful, and believing that no letter through the ordinary channel could arrive at Menindie previous to Mr. Wright's departure, did not attempt to communicate with him regarding the expedition, at a distance of about 400 miles, as practically beyond their control.

On the particulars of Stuart's route reaching Melbourne, a despatch was forwarded conveying the intelligence to Burke. The disasters which befel the bearers of this despatch involved the necessity of affording them relief, and obliged Mr. Wright afterwards to reorganise his party. Mr. Wright finally left Menindie on the 27th January, and it is needless to recapitulate the difficulties which at a season so unfavourable were encountered by him in crossing the desert intervening between the Darling and Cooper Creek; those difficulties being much aggravated by scurvy, which prostrated several members of the party, and under which the scientific and enthusiastic Becker and his associates (Stone and Purcell) succumbed.

Whilst Mr. Wright and his companions were suffering from difficulties of no ordinary character, Burke and Wills, accompanied by King and Gray,